

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 3997

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PINS, LE, SY, PEPR
SUBJ: MONDAY MORNING INTERVIEW WITH BACHIR GEMAYEL

1. SUMMARY: BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED. IN AN INTERVIEW WITH MONDAY MORNING, BACHIR GEMAYEL SAID THE WITHDRAWAL OF PRESIDENT SARKIS' RESIGNATION WOULD NOT AFFECT THE FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEMS FACING LEBANON. GEMAYEL CHARACTERIZED THE LEBANESE REGIME AS "OUTDATED" AND IN NEED OF CHANGE, AND POINTED OUT THAT "EXTERNAL GUARANTEES" WOULD NOT SOLVE LEBANON'S PROBLEMS. HE ALSO REJECTED PARTITION, CALLED FOR WITHDRAWAL OF ALL OCCUPATION FORCES, AND PLEDGED TO DISMANTLE CHRISTIAN MILITIAS WHEN A STRONG "LEBANESE" STATE EMERGED. END SUMMARY.

2. THE 17 JULY ISSUE OF THE BEIRUT ENGLISH-LANGUAGE WEEKLY MONDAY MORNING CARRIED AN INTERVIEW WITH BACHIR GEMAYEL, COMMANDER OF THE CHRISTIAN "UNIFIED LEBANESE FORCES," GIVEN ONLY HOURS AFTER LEBANESE PRESIDENT ELIAS SARKIS HAD ANNOUNCED
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THAT HE WAS WITHDRAWING HIS THREAT TO RESIGN. THE THRUST OF BACHIR'S COMMENTS, AS REPORTED BY MONDAY MORNING, WAS THAT "NOTHING HAS CHANGED" AND THAT "THE WITHDRAWAL OF PRESIDENT ELIAS SARKIS' RESIGNATION DOES NOT SOLVE LEBANON'S PROBLEMS."

3. IN COMMENTING ON THE PRESIDENT'S THREAT TO RESIGN, MONDAY MORNING REPORTED THAT GEMAYEL SAID THAT "THE RESIG-

NATION OR NON-RESIGNATION OF THE PRESIDENT . . . CAN HAVE NO EFFECT ON THE FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEM FACING US. THE FACT IS THAT THE REGIME AND THE CONSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK WITHIN WHICH IT IS MOVING ARE OUTDATED . . . IN MY VIEW, THE PRESIDENT'S WITHDRAWAL OF HIS RESIGNATION WILL NOT INCREASE HIS ABILITY TO GAIN CONTROL OF THE COUNTRY IN THE FUTURE." GEMAYEL CHARACTERIZED THE MATTER AS A "FUNDAMENTAL ONE" WHICH WENT BEYOND THE REPLACEMENT OF A CABINET OR A PRESIDENT, AND WHICH PERTAINED TO "THE TYPE OF REGIME LEBANON HAS HAD SINCE 1943 . . . THIS REGIME MUST BE CHANGED," GEMAYEL STATED.

4. THROUGHOUT THE INTERVIEW GEMAYEL WAS GENERALLY CRITICAL OF SARKIS. GEMAYEL LABELED SARKIS AS A "CHEHABIST" AND STATED THAT "CHEHABISTS" ALWAYS RELY ON EXTERNAL GUARANTEES TO SOLVE THEIR PROBLEMS. GEMAYEL THEN POINTED OUT THAT THE ONLY REAL GUARANTEES (FOR PEACE) WOULD BE "A TOTAL FUSION BETWEEN THE PEOPLE AND THE AUTHORITIES - A FUSION WHICH THE CURRENT OLIGARCHY HAS NOT UNDERSTOOD AND IS INCAPABLE OF ACHIEVING." GEMAYEL FURTHER ELABORATED, SAYING THAT THERE HAD BEEN "FUNDAMENTAL CHANGES" WITHIN THE LEBANESE POPULATION, BUT THAT THESE CHANGES HAD NOT BEEN UNDERSTOOD BY THE REGIME, WHICH STILL BELIEVED THAT "THE LEBANESE PEOPLE CAN BE LED BY THE BOOT OF A SMALL CORPORAL IN THE DEUXIEME BUREAU."

5. ACCORDING TO THE INTERVIEW, GEMAYEL ALSO STATED THAT:

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--HE REJECTED "THE PARTITION TO WHICH ARAB, AMERICAN AND LEBANESE ACTIONS ARE LEADING LEBANON." HE HADDED THAT THOSE WHO WERE WORKING FOR PARTITION WERE "THE LEBANESE AUTHORITIES, THE SYRIANS AUTHORITIES, EVEN THE AMERICAN AND ARAB AUTHORITIES."

--HE DEMANDED "THE IMMEDIATE WITHDRAWAL OF ALL OCCUPATION FORCES" FROM LEBANON.

--HE BELIEVED THE ISRAELI OVERFLIGHTS STOPPED THE SYRIAN BOMBARDMENT OF EAST BEIRUT. HE ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT THE CHRISTIANS HAD "NO CONTACTS WITH ISRAEL."

--HE PLEDGED TO DISMANTLE THE CHRISTIAN MILITIAS AS SOON AS A STRONG "LEBANESE" STATE EMERGED. IN MAKING THIS PLEDGE, HOWEVER, GEMAYEL EMPHASIZED THE "LEBANESE" CHARACTER OF THE STATE.

--HE VOWED THAT "IN A SHORT ENOUGH TIME, SINCE THINGS ARE MOVING RAPIDLY, WE WILL SUCCEED IN LIBERATING OURSELVES FROM ALL THE FOREIGNERS WHO ARE ON OUR TERRITORY." END
UNCLASSIFIED.

6. BEGIN CONFIDENTIAL. COMMENT: BACHIR'S REMARKS INDICATE HE REMAINS ANTAGONISTIC TOWARD SARKIS AND THE PRESENT LEBANESE GOVERNMENTAL SYSTEM AND THAT HE HAS NO INTENTION OF DISARMING HIS MILITIA UNDER PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES. IN CALLING FOR THE "IMMEDIATE WITHDRAWAL OF ALL OCCUPATIONAL FORCES," HE MAKES PLAIN THAT HIS OPPOSITION TOWARDS THE SYRIAN PRESENCE REMAINS UNCOMPROMISING. HIS VOW TO LIBERATE LEBANON FROM "FOREIGNERS" (PRESUMABLY SYRIANS AND PALESTINAINS) IS A VIRTUAL CALL TO ARMS. END COMMENT. END CONFIDENTIAL. PARKER

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